

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE FIRST THREE RULES OF BICYCLE SAFETY ARE
1. WEAR A HELMET 2. WEAR A HELMET 3. WEAR A HELMET**

(RICHMOND, Va.)—If you ever wondered whether bicycle helmets and other safety gear are really necessary, consider this: bicycles are associated with more childhood injuries than any other consumer product except automobiles.

In 2004, 332 bike-related injuries were serious enough to cause hospitalization in Virginia. Eight bike riders in the state died that year. Of the bike-related hospitalizations, 97 were for traumatic brain injuries, which can cause severe disability. Helmets can reduce the risk of brain injury by 90 percent.

“The single most important thing a child can do to reduce the severity of a bike-related injury is to wear a properly fitting helmet,” said State Health Commissioner Robert B. Stroube, M.D., M.P.H. “Every bike rider, skateboarder, in-line skate enthusiast and scooter rider needs to wear a helmet every time.”

More children and adolescents die from injury than from all other causes combined. The Virginia Department of Health offers these tips to reduce the risk of injury to cyclists and skaters.

- Bikes are considered vehicles. Learn and obey the rules of the road.
- Ride on the right side of the road with the flow of traffic.
- Use appropriate hand signals.
- Obey all traffic signs, especially stop signs.
- Look left, right and left again before crossing the street.
- Helmets should sit level on the head two finger widths above the eyebrows.
- Bike helmets must be labeled as meeting the Consumer Product Safety Commission’s standard for bicycle helmets.
- Use wrist guards and elbow/knee pads when riding scooters, skates and skateboards.

Learn more about bicycle safety by visiting VDH’s Bike Smart Virginia program at www.vahealth.org/civp/bike/index.asp.

EDITOR’S NOTE: This is one in a series of Summer Safety Week news releases calling attention to summertime risks. Read more VDH news at www.vdh.virginia.gov/news to learn other steps Virginians can take to protect their families.

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